



**U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
BUREAU FOR HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE (BHR)  
OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)**

***ETHIOPIA – Complex Emergency/Drought  
and Health Outbreak***

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**Background**

In May 1998, Ethiopia and Eritrea began a military confrontation over their shared border, which extends approximately 600 miles. The border dispute resulted in intermittent outbreaks of violence, destruction of infrastructure, and significant displacement in both countries. A second round of intense fighting between Ethiopian and Eritrean troops began on May 12, 2000. The Organization for African Unity (OAU) brokered a cessation of hostilities agreement that was signed by both countries on June 18, 2000. As part of the agreement, the United Nations (U.N.) established the U.N. Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) to oversee peacekeeping initiatives between the two countries. UNMEE consists of approximately 4,200 troops and military observers to monitor the two countries' adherence to the terms of the peace agreement and conduct demining that will facilitate the resettlement of conflict-affected populations.

In addition to the conflict, Ethiopia has also been struggling with the effects of three consecutive years of below-average rainfall. In FY 2000, severe drought conditions culminated in the most widespread food crisis in the country since the famine of 1984-85. In addition to household food insecurity, drought-affected populations suffered from severe water shortages, extensive losses of livestock and other assets, and increased malnutrition. Pastoralist populations in southern and southeastern Ethiopia, facing losses of as much as 60-80% of their herds in some areas, were forced to migrate to other areas in search of pasture and water sources.

Ethiopia is located in the sub-Saharan Africa "Meningitis Belt" and periodically experiences widespread outbreaks of meningococcal meningitis. The largest epidemics in Ethiopia took place in 1981 and 1989, with 45,000-50,000 cases reported during both outbreaks.

**Numbers Affected**

*Conflict-Affected:* According to the U.N. 2001 Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Ethiopia, more than 360,000 conflict-affected internally displaced persons (IDPs) were displaced by the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea. U.N. estimates indicate that 31,465 Ethiopians were returned from Eritrea after the cease-fire in June 2000.

*Drought-Affected:* In 2000, at the peak of the drought emergency, the U.N. estimated that 10.2 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance. In the current 2001 U.N. Appeal, however, an estimated 6.2 million people, primarily in the Tigray, Afar, Amhara, Oromiya, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples (SNNP), and Somali regions were estimated to be in need of humanitarian assistance due to the drought. In April 2001, the World Food Program (WFP) reported that 2.5 million pastoralists and small-scale farmers were highly vulnerable and facing serious food shortages. In addition, large pockets of drought-affected IDPs remain in the Somali region.

*Meningococcal Meningitis-Affected:* The Ethiopian Ministry of Health (MOH) issued an appeal on February 28 requesting more than 6.74 million doses of the Meningitis vaccine, estimating that more than 8.4 million people were at risk of contracting Meningococcal Meningitis in all nine of Ethiopia's regions. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), from October 11, 2000 to May 31, 2001, there were 6,266 reported cases and 311 reported deaths from Meningococcal Meningitis.

**Current Situation**

*Conflict-Affected Populations:* With the deployment of more than 4,200 U.N. peacekeepers and the establishment of the 25-kilometer wide Temporary Security Zone (TSZ) between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the humanitarian situation of Ethiopians along the border is moving from crisis to recovery. Most Ethiopians who fled their homes in the North due to fighting have returned, however, a small number of people still remain displaced. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has taken the lead in repatriating expelled civilians, and, to date, there have been more than 13 repatriation convoys from Eritrea to Ethiopia. Response efforts for conflict-affected populations focus on the rehabilitation of livelihoods and essential infrastructure.

*Drought-Affected Populations:* The number of people affected by drought conditions in Ethiopia has substantially decreased over the last year, and the situation has generally moved from crisis to recovery for millions of Ethiopians in the drought-affected areas. Despite a late start to the current rainy season, rainfall in late April and May has

regenerated pasture and water resources across most of the Somali region. The majority of the population has begun to rebuild their herds and plant small crops in agro-pastoral areas.

Despite positive recovery trends among drought-affected people, pockets of the population in the Somali region have experienced an increase in malnutrition rates. These high malnutrition rates are due to security concerns and logistical constraints, which have hampered the delivery of humanitarian assistance, and a lack of recovery programs for this population.

*The Belg Rains:* Belg rains begin in February in the northern part of the country, in April in the southeast, and in May in the southwest. The rains last for two months. Although the Belg season provides only 5-10% of annual food production, the rains are critical because they supply crops with nutrients and replenish water sources in the drought-prone southern regions. A recent USAID/Ethiopia and USAID/Famine Early Warning System Network (USAID/FEWSNET) assessment of Belg production areas in the Amhara and Tigray regions reveals that, even though the rain were late, the current Belg season is very favorable and for the first time in three to four years the rains adequately met the historical precipitation averages. The Ministry of Agriculture estimates that 40-60% of the land planned for the 2001 Belg harvest has been planted in the areas visited by the assessment team. Previous Belg crop failures are considered to be the primary reason for the limited planting, with local farmers apprehensive about using the March rains for planting crops.

*Meningococcal Meningitis Epidemic:* Even though districts in Ethiopia continue to report new cases, it appears that the peak of the Meningitis outbreak occurred in April. On April 6, 2001, WHO and UNICEF issued a special report on the Meningitis outbreak in Ethiopia. The report drew urgent attention to the need for millions of doses of the Meningitis vaccine in order to stop the spread of the outbreak.

#### **USG Assistance**

*USAID/OFDA:* In FY 2000, USAID/OFDA spent approximately \$14.8 million to support emergency health, nutrition, water, agriculture and logistics programs. Due to the continued effects of the border conflict and drought on Ethiopia's population, U.S. Ambassador Tibor B. Nagy Jr. reissued a disaster declaration for drought and conflict in Ethiopia on October 13, 2000. In response, USAID/OFDA has continued to support programs that facilitate the recovery of drought-affected and conflict-affected populations. Current and planned programs support nutritional surveillance, water, food security, early warning, and coordination activities. In FY 2001 to date, USAID/OFDA has obligated approximately \$800,000 to the International Rescue Committee for water/sanitation and WFP for air bridge support due to increased security concerns in the Somali region.

On March 13, 2001, U.S. Ambassador Tibor B. Nagy, Jr. issued a disaster declaration in response to the outbreak of Meningococcal Meningitis affecting people in all nine of Ethiopia's administrative regions. In response to this disaster declaration, USAID/OFDA authorized \$25,000 for immediate disaster assistance. The funds were released to the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) for operational expenses associated with responding to the Meningitis outbreak. In addition, on April 6, USAID/Ethiopia requested technical assistance from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) who provided two epidemiologists to assist the WHO and the Ethiopian MOH with management of the outbreak.

*USAID/FFP:* In FY 2001, USAID's Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP) expects P.L. 480 Title II emergency food assistance to populations affected by drought and conflict in Ethiopia to total approximately 192,660 MT, valued at more than \$90.7 million. These food commodities will support nutrition, health and food security programs for conflict and drought-affected populations.

*USDA:* In FY 2001, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is planning to contribute 130,000 MT of Section 416(b) emergency food commodities to Ethiopia, valued at more than \$54 million. All of the commodities are provided to WFP and are distributed through general distributions, targeted supplementary feeding, food-for-work, and food-for-training activities.

*State/PRM:* In FY 2000, the Department of State's Bureau for Population Refugees and Migration (PRM) provided \$95.6 million in assistance for refugees and conflict-affected victims in Africa, unearmarked by country, and approximately \$4.8 million in support of refugees and displaced populations specifically in Ethiopia. FY 2001 funding has not been earmarked at this time.

#### **Summary of USG Emergency FY 2001 Funding (to date)**

USAID/OFDA .....	\$824,363
USAID/FFP .....	\$90,700,000
USDA .....	\$54,640,000
<b>Total USG Assistance in FY 2001.....</b>	<b>\$146,164,363</b>